

BoatCraft Pacific

THE ILUKA SEA KAYAK.

Designed by David Payne

The Iluka sea kayak is a contemporary plywood design based on the 5.2m length and 575mm beam dimensions favoured by many of the dedicated sea kayak enthusiasts. These proportions give a responsive boat with good stability, able to cruise at a high speed. Compared to my earlier 5.5m, 650 mm beam design, this narrower hull should be much easier to Eskimo roll, a good safety feature offshore when this technique is used as a defensive or recovery measure in awkward seas. The high bow helps the kayak lift over choppy water, and the veed single chine hull form gives a shape that can be controlled with normal paddling techniques and does not require a rudder or skeg, although they can be fitted if preferred. With the rounded deck and sweeping sheer line, this becomes a simple but elegant craft, capable of undertaking challenging voyages.

Iluka's hull is made by the stitch and glue method, with taped and filleted seams at the chine and keel. The hull is also reinforced with a layer of fibreglass cloth. Bulkheads are filleted into the hull, with the compartments at either end foam filled for strength and permanent buoyancy. The layout includes two large major stowage compartments and a smaller one behind the cockpit.

Panels for the Iluka are cut to the offsets and layout included with the plans, using 4 sheets of ply. The hull is made from 4mm thick Gaboon plywood, the deck is 3 or 4 mm thick. Hatches, bulkheads and coamings can also be cut from the material not used for the major panels. The basic craft can be assembled over a few weekends.

An arrangement is drawn out, but building your own boat allows you the option of customising details to suit your own preferences. Experienced sea kayakers can be quite particular about their choice of fittings and layout. Those new to the sport would do well to seek their advice or refer to books on sea kayaking before making final decisions on deck lines, stowage and internal bracing.

Boatcraft Pacific (07 3806 1944) can supply all materials requirements from plywood only right through to the full kit including Bote-Cote epoxy, plywood, fibreglass, timber, etc, even the rope grab handles and paint brushes. Plans only cost \$140.00. As a simple day boat without hatches or a fully fitted expedition craft, the Iluka is a wonderful recreational craft, easily transported by car, and good for your fitness.

Length	5.2 m.
Beam	575 mm
Weight	18-19 kg
Plans cost	\$140.00

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Iluka Sea Kayak

At 575mm beam this is a sea kayak for the enthusiasts, and they will find the veed hull shape quite controllable, without needing a rudder or skeg for directional stability. Such simplicity makes for a reliable craft when you are exploring wilderness areas, one of the appeals of the sport. This design, at 5.2m or 17 feet long, is a good sized craft, able to maintain a handy cruising speed with a useful carrying capacity. The simple but elegant lines give it a handsome appearance too, without sacrificing seaworthiness.

The hull uses two sheets of 4mm marine grade plywood while the deck uses two sheets of 3mm, and the remaining structure comes from the unused portions, its an economic craft to build compared to buying a production boat at retail prices. Construction for the hull is stitch and glue. The panels are cut to the offsets provided, wired together, the hull aligned and then filleted, its a simple and speedy process. The exterior is reinforced with a covering of fibreglass cloth. Bulkheads divide and support the hull and deck, the ends are foam filled for added buoyancy. Details are provided for coamings and hatches, even a skeg if you decide you do want more control. The advantage of building your own design is that you can fit out the boat to suit your preferences.

A skilled kayaker will appreciate the qualities of the Iluka, particularly the balance of stability and freeboard, which should allow this craft to do the Eskimo roll manoeuvre whenever needed. A beginner will enjoy the challenge of learning how such a simple boat is handled and then quickly move out onto open water with experience.

The two drawings include construction details, layout, panel layout and offsets, bulkheads and stem profile. There is also a set of instructions. Boatcraft Pacific Qld, (07 3806 1944) can supply plans and a kit of materials including paint.

LOA 5.2m, Beam 575mm.

